

Fire/Rescue Services

Santa Rosa County

Strategic Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The Fire Department Strategic Plan for Santa Rosa County represents the efforts of many individuals in evaluating the Fire Department and its mission. Anticipating the future, in terms of building a flexible organization, is an important facet in this process. The Fire Department must be able to react to change, resolve problems, and work together with other departments and agencies on issues that might arise. It must assess community needs and develop resources to meet those needs. Finally, it must create a plan to provide comprehensive and cost-effective services to the customers – Santa Rosa County citizens.

The purpose of developing a Fire/Rescue Service plan is:

- ❖ To develop an outline for the future of fire/rescue services in the north and central portions of the county.
- ❖ Identify needs to expand and finance the necessary services.
- ❖ Become more efficient and effective in providing fire/rescue services through a functional consolidation including standardized procedures, purchasing, personnel policies and sharing of resources.

This plan will also promote a commitment to address new issues and opportunities while expecting and absorbing changes. The departments will strive to be open-minded and continuously explore new ways to better serve the customers and protect personnel.

The plan will be a continuous work in progress and updates will be posted as changes or additions are drafted.

Once the plan is developed and implemented it will be modified periodically for priority changes, budgetary constraints, and planning refinements and will consistently provide an overview of anticipated activities and requirements. General economic conditions and the capability to fund projects will play a crucial role in determining the actual time that resources are secured and projects completed.

The plan will guide the Fire Department's development over the next ten to fifteen years. It will inform Fire Department members of the direction for the future and serve as the foundation document for informing policy makers and addressing the budget process.

Your comments and suggestions regarding specific policy statements are encouraged. Each section has an area for you to email your comments.

DEPARTMENT STATEMENTS

Vision

To serve Santa Rosa County citizens and visitors by making it a safer place to live and work.

Mission

To reduce death, injury and property loss due to fire and other emergencies;
To provide guidance on fire protection measures and fire hazards;
To educate the community and promote public awareness on fire safety;
To render first response aid to the sick and injured.

Values

Upholding high standards and integrity;
Striving for professionalism and continuous improvement;
Dedication and commitment to providing quality service;
Readiness in meeting challenge and accepting accountability;
Develop and maintain a working relationship with all members of the emergency response community.

Human Dignity

We commit to treat all mankind in a manner that most people would desire and consider acceptable. Respect, dignity, honesty, compassion, understanding, and trust are fundamental to the strength of the fire and rescue services in Santa Rosa County.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Named for Rosa de Viterbo, a Roman Catholic saint, Santa Rosa County was created in 1842. The County offers diverse and unique neighborhoods from inlet residential communities, suburban residential areas to rural/agriculture and pineland residential areas. The County operates under the Board of County Commissioners. A county administrator oversees staff of 424, dedicated to excellence and committed to innovative approaches for high-quality services. The County with its estimated population of 143,000 provides a range of general municipal benefit services including fire, street construction/maintenance and neighborhood improvement. Police, fire, and emergency medical personnel are available 24 hours a day and help is only minutes away by dialing 9-1-1.

South Santa Rosa County comprises the area from Holley and Navarre in the east to Gulf Breeze at the western end of the Gulf Breeze Peninsula and along U.S. Highway 98. A section of Santa Rosa Island, containing the unincorporated community of Navarre Beach, is also part of South Santa Rosa County. Major bodies of water including Santa Rosa Sound, Pensacola Bay and East Bay strongly influence the housing and lifestyle of citizens in the southern part of the county. Central Santa Rosa County is the area north of the bays and south of the extensive forests separating it from North Santa Rosa. The central section developed along “The Old Spanish Trail” that ran from St. Augustine on the Atlantic Ocean all the way to New Orleans. The county seat, Milton is located where the trail

crossed the Blackwater River. To the west of Milton is the fast growing communities of Pea Ridge and Pace. Interstate 10 passes through the central area of Santa Rosa County. Northern Santa Rosa County is forest and farming country. The only town in the north is Jay. A large oil and natural gas field around Jay produced a great deal of oil, and made many farmers millionaires in the 1970s and 1980s, but the field is producing little oil today. The citizens have for the most part, returned to farming and forestry for their livelihoods.

Adjacent Counties:

Escambia County, Alabama – north

Okaloosa County, Florida – east

Escambia County, Florida – west

Santa Rosa County, Florida



Map



Location in the state of Florida

ASSUMPTIONS FOR PLANNING

- Santa Rosa County covers a land area of approximately 1,017 square miles and a population of 143,000 according to a July 1, 2005 Census estimate, an 18% increase since 2000, making it the 84th fastest growing county in the United States during that time frame.
- Continued improvements in the fire-related provision of the State of Florida Uniform Building and Fire Codes will have a positive impact on new construction.
- Service delivery to people is the Fire Department's priority. Demands on the departments continue to increase, most notably in the areas of medical services, special operations, and special event services. This results in programmatic impacts on training development and maintenance, equipment and supplies, and time management.
- In 2006, 66% of the 11,066 emergency responses were for medical services with only 34% of the responses being fire-related. This medical service percentage will increase as the citizens of the community continue to age.
- Increased use of smoke detectors and automatic sprinkler systems will result in earlier detection and control of structure fires, thus resulting in fewer fire fatalities, fire-related injuries, and lowered structural fire loss.
- Fire station location and fire company deployment assumes continued emphasis on traffic management and the continued implementation of the emergency vehicle preemption system.
- The fire departments positive relationship with other departments and County agencies will be maintained and enhanced in an effort to provide highly effective emergency services to Santa Rosa County residents.
- Mutual aid with the City of Milton, Gulf Breeze, Escambia and Okaloosa Counties, along with legislative districts continues to serve all communities well. This system serves to significantly strengthen each of the respective departments to provide high-quality, efficient emergency services.

DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES

The fire department has five major priorities, which are:

Fire Suppression – Respond rapidly to fire calls and carry out effective fire-fighting operation.

Fire Protection/Prevention – Educate the public on fire protection measures. Promote public awareness on fire safety and ensure fire safety requirements.

Rescue Services – Provide effective and efficient rescue services while promoting a county wide deployment plan.

Emergency Medical Services – Respond expeditiously to medical calls providing optimal medical care.

Training – Establish training and continuing education standards that meet or exceed state requirements.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To provide general guidelines, the Fire Services Plan established eleven organizational goals to reflect its mission statement. The Fire Departments shall annually establish objectives to reach these organizational goals and use these objectives to establish an annual work plan and evaluate department progress. Outlined herein are the organizational goals and objectives:

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1

PERSONNEL:

The Fire Departments will professionally staff at a level that will enable it to deliver services to citizens in an effective, efficient, and safe manner.

Objectives:

- Develop a plan to maintain a work force comprised of volunteer and/or paid staff capable of providing quality services to the needs that may be anticipated in Santa Rosa County based on historical data.
- Implement and enforce procedures to ensure a workplace free of violence and harassment while promoting unity.
- Develop a Succession Plan and hiring procedures to ensure proper and timely replacement of personnel to maintain functional leadership.
- Establish competency-based job descriptions for all positions in the department in order to clarify roles and expectations, properly evaluate performance, and recruit and hire qualified applicants.
- Implement a validated physical agility test for all fire personnel.
- Develop a minimum manning objective.
- Develop a plan to educate and encourage department personnel on their professional image in the community.

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 2

RECRUITMENT:

The Fire Department will employ and retain a talented, committed, and diverse membership to continue the strong legacy of service to the community and sustain the organization for the future.

Objectives:

- Develop a plan to recruit and hire qualified and diverse employees or volunteers with an emphasis on equal opportunity employment.
- Review the procedures used in conducting candidate interviews.
- Develop recruitment, selection, promotion, and training strategies that address the Department's personnel needs.
- Implement specific procedures for filling vacant positions with the most qualified individuals.
- Review the procedures for filling vacant positions more rapidly and revise existing orientation to provide a more effective and efficient process.
- Review and amend the procedures for recruitment advertising.

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 3

TRAINING:

The Fire Department will identify areas of need and develop training programs to assist its members to become more proficient in personnel management and supervisory leadership, emergency service delivery, customer service, emergency incident management, safety, fire prevention and public safety education.

Objectives:

- Develop training program that identifies consistent minimum standards
- Create training classes on personnel management and supervisory skills.
- Conduct quality improvement analysis at the company, shift, or departmental level to reinforce positive aspects of operations at significant incidents; identify and address problem areas.
- Develop a plan to continue to provide quality training to enhance the proficiency, operational consistency and safety for volunteer and career fire fighters.
- Implement training alternatives that include obtaining highly trained personnel such as physicians, specialists, arson investigators, instructors for the fire college, etc. to teach classes
- Develop and construct a training facility in a central location.
- Develop a program in conjunction with emergency management communications to train dispatchers and improve response time.
- Conduct multi-company multi-department training using the fire training grounds.
- Develop a plan to annually review new policies and procedures of the departments.
- Develop training to educate fire/rescue personnel on services offered to the public by other agencies.
- Develop a plan to implement training with mutual aid companies.
- Develop a plan to promote use of higher learning including programs through the National Fire Academy and National Emergency Training Center.
- Develop a program with the local community college for personnel to receive credits for re-certifications.

SAFETY

GOAL 4

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

The Fire Department will protect the health and safety of personnel through effective, training, education, programs, and management.

Objectives:

- Develop a program to continue providing appropriate inoculations and communicable disease screenings, including TB, Hepatitis, and Influenza. Enhance the program as medical research advances.
- Develop and implement an annual medical examination and FIT test for all firefighters.
- Develop a comprehensive fire apparatus preventive maintenance program.
- Review and update the departmental Standard Operating Guidelines.
- Research and review means of implementing NFPA 1500 into the fire department with budget recommendations and future planning.
- Develop a plan to place more emphasis on stress management and critical incident stress intervention.
- Develop a program to review and recommend fitness and wellness programs and equipment and hold quarterly safety meetings to reduce injuries and improve health.

OPERATIONS

GOAL 5

EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

The Fire Department will deliver emergency services in a safe and efficient manner.

Objectives:

- Create the position of Emergency Services Coordinator to provide guidance and oversight.
- Maintain automatic mutual aid with all Fire/Rescue departments and adjacent counties.
- Purchase and install automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in all first-line emergency responder vehicles.
- Develop and implement procedures to ensure a prompt, professional, and safe response to emergency incidents.
- Develop a plan to research firefighter methods to keep the department on the cutting edge of technology and safety.
- Develop a plan to monitor the need for hiring additional personnel to maintain the protection, efficiency, and safety throughout the County.
- Research and develop the ability to effectively track training and measure service delivery..
- Develop a plan for determining operational effectiveness and efficiency, i.e. response times, injuries on duty, call volume, etc.
- Develop a plan and purchase equipment to access data from the CAD and RMS systems while in the field.

OPERATIONS

GOAL 6

MEDICAL SERVICES:

The Fire Department will save lives, reduce suffering, and speed recovery from injury and illness by delivering basic optimal pre-hospital throughout the county.

Objectives:

- Develop and implement a first responder, EMT and paramedic certification and re-certification program.

- Contract the position of a centralized medical director.

- Develop a program that continually researches the advancements in EMS equipment to stay on the cutting edge of technology in the emergency medical field.

- Develop a program for the participation in a quality improvement review to ensure optimal care and customer service is provided.

- Develop a program to provide public health care education and available services.

- Develop and implement procedures for response utilizing Medical Priority Dispatch System determinants.

- Develop a plan that encourages personnel to maintain association with hospitals and their staffs, fire service groups, and other agencies to continue having the valued input needed to formulate policies related to providing Emergency Medical Services.

- Develop a program to incorporate mandatory competency skills training.

- Develop procedures to provide medical assistance or necessary resources to help citizens who do not require ambulance transport.

PREPAREDNESS

GOAL 7

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

The Fire Department will take appropriate steps to mitigate disasters in their districts, minimizing the impact of those that do occur, and assist the County in the management of response and recovery operations for all types of emergencies.

Objectives:

- Develop operational plans for serious and/or long-term hazardous materials incidents, water situations that threaten or have caused serious flooding and/or damage, mass casualties, significant numbers of homeless citizens or fires of conflagration proportions, plane crash incidents, major transportation or industrial incidents including major structural collapse situations, and acts of terrorism. This should focus on consistency with homeland security levels.
- Develop operational plans for any situation requiring significant or extensive warning to the public.
- Research and complete community risk assessments that will enhance the community preparedness efforts.
- Develop a plan to improve the use of the Dialogic system designed to contact a selected area and deliver safety information via recorded message.
- Implement manning procedures for the position of Emergency Support Function 4 during Emergency Operation Center activation.
- Develop a “Master Book” of emergency resources.
- Research and develop a “Community Needs Response Plan” to address specific needs with short-term goals for the citizens' quality of life.
- Develop a program to promote life safety and disaster preparedness through public education.
- Provide training and support for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.

RISK REDUCTION

GOAL 8

PREVENTION AND INSPECTION:

The Fire Department will prevent loss of life, injury, and property loss to fire through the creation, implementation, and management of comprehensive and effective education programs.

Objectives:

- Develop a program to familiarize firefighters with buildings/occupancies before conducting emergency operations.

- Develop and implement a self-inspection program for homes and businesses.

- Produce pre-plans of all commercial structures.

- Develop procedures to assist Code Enforcement and Building Inspections Departments to ensure that applicable codes and ordinances are enforced in existing structures.

- Plan and conduct demonstrations of the Departments capabilities to the public while reinforcing fire prevention and fire life safety behaviors.

- Develop a plan that offers fire prevention advice and assistance.

- Research and develop Public Service Announcements (PSA) for radio, TV/cable, and newspaper articles.

- Develop a program to implement annual hydrant inspections.

- Develop a program that assists with the enforcement of the ordinance ensuring all homes and businesses have addresses.

RISK REDUCTION

GOAL 9

COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT:

The Fire Department will educate citizens on their role in making the community safer by preventing fires, minimizing long-term health risks, preventing hazardous materials incidents, and mitigating risks associated with disasters.

Objectives:

- Maintain a program to provide regularly scheduled CPR courses to the public with a high priority on high school students in health and child development classes.
- Develop a plan to conduct fire station tours to introduce children and adults to fire personnel, fire equipment, fire stations, and the services.
- Research and implement a “Getting Acquainted In Your Neighborhood” (G.A.I.N.) program for fire companies.
- Research a program to conduct a citizen fire academy.
- Develop a program to utilize media for public safety messages and department information such as fire safety, babysitter safety, senior citizen safety, fire extinguisher demonstrations, disaster preparedness, smoke detector programs, and fire station tours.
- Develop a program to review and enhance the department’s relationship with local businesses to support prevention efforts associated with fire loss and injury. Offer fire extinguisher training and CPR classes to businesses and industrial operations.
- Research and produce a marketing video and publication.
- Maintain a program to visit public and private schools to reinforce fire prevention and children escape routes.
- Develop a plan to train citizens on the proper use of the emergency 911-phone system.

MAINTENANCE

GOAL 10

FACILITIES, APPARATUS, AND EQUIPMENT:

The Fire Department will provide safe and effective fire apparatus and equipment through a comprehensive preventive maintenance, repair, and replacement program.

Objectives:

- Plan and construct a drill tower.

- Develop a plan to utilize National EVT certified mechanics.

- Develop a plan to evaluate front-line apparatus for replacement after ten years of service and incorporate funding schedule into the Department's budget.

- Develop a Fire Facilities Plan to ensure existing and future buildings meet code requirements and have adequate space and equipment in order to support the needs of departmental personnel and the dynamic demands of the service area.

- Develop a plan to evaluate fire station locations to ensure facilities are located strategically within the county for optimal response times and to obtain highest available points for Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings.

- Develop a plan for truck deployment from high service area to low service area to optimize truck purchasing and utilization.

- Develop and implement a program to ensure all fire department equipment, stations, vehicles, and personnel reflect a professional image.

- Develop procedures for standardization of equipment to optimize utilization, replacement parts storage and reduce repair cost.

- Research and develop an in-house vehicle maintenance program for all fire department apparatus and equipment.

- Maintain a plan for diesel fuel availability.

- Develop and implement procedures for reporting and correcting all maintenance.

ADMINISTRATIVE

GOAL 11

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT THROUGH QUALITY MANAGEMENT:

The Fire Department will operate from an established philosophy and framework that allows for and encourages continuous improvement of the goals and objectives and evaluation of services.

Objectives:

- Conduct monthly planning and review meetings to follow up on accomplishments and activities.

- Review and update departmental policies and procedures (SOGs) to ensure consistency.

- Report progress annually to the Board of County Commissioners.

- Review and establish priorities for capitol project needs.

- Develop and implement an internal communication plan to ensure quality service, timely distribution of information, consistent feedback, and alignment of strategic goals and actions.

- Complete an annual review of the Strategic Plan to ensure progress, making adjustments based on a changing fiscal, political, and operational environment.

- Explore alternative funding to maximize the use of tax dollars.

- Develop a plan to improve services to achieve a lower fire insurance rating (Insurance Services Office) to lower fire insurance cost.

- Assist the Board of County Commissioners in addressing long-term funding and alternative funding to maintain and enhance current levels of fire protection and services.

- Develop and publish an annual report to the community.